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FM AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4671
INFO RUEHZH/HAITI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY 1299
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA PRIORITY 1134
RUEHQU/AMCONSUL QUEBEC PRIORITY 0630
RUEAHLG/HOMELAND SECURITY CENTER WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUMIAAA/HQ USSOUTHCOM J2 MIAMI FL PRIORITY
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 1044

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 PORT AU PRINCE 002273

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
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STATE FOR WHA/EX AND WHA/CAR
S/CRS
SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD
STATE PASS AID FOR LAC/CAR
INR/IAA (BEN-YEHUDA)
WHA/EX PLEASE PASS USOAS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [HA](#)
SUBJECT: YOUNG WOMAN'S VIOLENT MURDER SPARKS OUTRAGE; PM
BLAMES DEPORTEES FOR UPTICK IN CRIME

REF: PORT AU PRINCE 2207

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¶1. (U) This message is sensitive but unclassified -- please protect accordingly.

¶2. (U) Summary: The kidnapping and murder of a young woman, Natasha Dessources, has shocked and angered the population of Port-au-Prince over the past two weeks. The story has caused a strong reaction from the public and the press, including anti-government demonstrations at the girl's funeral. The reaction shows a mounting frustration with the government's policies towards gangs and kidnappings, and has forced Prime Minister Alexis to publicly defend his government. End summary.

A Brutal Crime

¶3. (U) On the night of November 13, kidnappers grabbed 20-year-old Natasha Farah Kerbie Dessources as she was entering her home in Marin on the northern edges of Port-au-Prince. The victim's mother desperately sought help from the Haitian police to no avail. Meanwhile, the judicial police (DCPJ), the Haitian police's main unit charged with fighting kidnapping, was embroiled in the scandal that eventually led to the resignation of director Michael Lucius (ref A). The kidnappers demanded a USD 30,000 ransom, but the young woman's mother, who makes her living selling telephone calls on the streets of Port-au-Prince, could only scrape together about USD 500, mostly from other impoverished merchants. The mother paid the kidnappers what she had, but the kidnappers refused to release Dessources. Authorities discovered her badly mutilated body on Thursday, November 16. The community has been shocked by the brutality of the crime, and Dessources' tragic story has gripped Port-au-Prince for the last two weeks.

Populace Outraged

¶4. (U) Port-au-Prince has experienced over a dozen kidnappings in recent weeks, but the Dessources murder has caused a strong reaction amongst the populace. Natasha's youth, beauty and light skin played into the drama of this particular case. There is a strong association in Haitian culture between skin color and class, and the girl's light skin was likely mistaken as a sign of wealth by her captors. News reports circulated the graphic details of the murder, and funeral attendees viewed a display of photos of her disfigured body.

Protests at the Funeral Blame Preval Administration

¶5. (SBU) A large crowd of demonstrators gathered at Dessources' funeral on Saturday, November 25 demanding that President Preval rethink his policy toward the gangs. The crowds accused the GoH of tolerating the kidnappings, and reminded Preval of his ultimatum to the gangs shortly after taking office to give up their weapons or die. The crowds also heckled Prime Minister Alexis while he attended the funeral, and he later expressed to us his great distress at Dessources' murder.

GoH on the Defensive

¶6. (SBU) Preval has not commented on the murder. However, the Prime Minister spoke out on November 27, claiming the GoH is making every effort to fight the gangs and asserting that the government's method of negotiating with them is both within their authority and an effective method of fighting insecurity. Alexis went on to blame US deportees for

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insecurity in Haiti, and sources close to the HNP are saying that two men arrested in the Dessources case are deportees from the US or Canada. (Note: The GoH has been complaining for months that deportees are to blame for the violence in the capital, but they have not provided any proof of this as yet. End note.)

¶7. (SBU) Comment: Dessources' tragic murder has brought into focus the GoH's as yet unresolved approach to security in the capital. Government officials are concerned that Haitians may be losing patience with the government's attempts to reduce criminal activity and kidnappings. However, we see no indication yet that the GoH is rethinking its current policy, nor do we sense anything more than a general frustration among the population that security remains a major preoccupation. End comment.
SANDERSON